

Quarterly Newsletter

July, August, September 2010

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*Preserving Soil & Water
through Conservation*

Edible Flowers

Donna Aufdenberg, University Extension Horticulture Specialist

Flowers have been used in cooking throughout history in many different cultures around the world. Even early American settlers commonly used flowers as food. Today, there is a renewed interest in edible flowers for their taste, color, and fragrance, especially in the organic realm of gardening.

"Edible flowers can be used fresh as a garnish or as an integral part of a dish, such as a salad. Squash flowers can be fried in light batter or cornmeal. Some flowers can be stuffed or used in stir-fry dishes. They can be candied; frozen in ice cubes and added to beverages; made into jellies and jams; used to make teas or wines; minced and added to cheese spreads, herbal butters, pancakes, crepes, and waffles. Many flowers can be used to make vinegars for cooking, marinades, or dressings for salad. Herbal flowers normally have the same flavor as their leaves, with the exceptions of chamomile and lavender blossoms, where the flavor is usually more subtle." According to Erv Evans with North Carolina State University.

Flower flavors can range from sweet to bitter. Some of the sweet flavored flowers include Chamomile, Dandelion, Daylily, Elderberry, Honeysuckle, Lavender, Pineapple Sage, Red Clover, Violet and Rose. If you want a spicy flavor, try Arugula, Broccoli, Nasturtium, Calendula and Signet Marigold. Other flowers that are eaten can have from a bland flavor to a veggie taste including English daisy, Bachelor Buttons, Daylily, Hollyhock, hibiscus, Pansy, Passion Flower, lemon and squash blossoms.

Some flowers are edible, but require a word of caution. Apple flowers should be eaten in smaller amounts, since they may contain cyanide precursors. The flowers of garden peas (*pisum sativum*) can be eaten, but flowering ornamental peas, like sweet peas, are poisonous. Chamomile may cause an allergic reaction in ragweed sufferers and no more than one cup of its tea should be drunk daily. Break the flowers of chives into small bits because of its strong flavor.

Growing edible flowers is essentially the same as growing flowers for ornamental purposes. To keep mild temperature loving plants such as pansies and calendula thriving, take extra care to mulch, fertilize and irrigate regularly. Water at the base of the plants to keep disease problems at bay. Chemicals for pest problems should be avoided. Hand pick or use mechanical, cultural or biological means of decreasing pest numbers. Many gardeners who use edible flowers on a regular basis locate their edible flower gardens away from other plants to avoid chemical spray drift. Many edible flowers can also be grown in containers. For harvesting flowers, flavors can vary with environmental conditions and varieties that are chosen. Make sure to taste some of the flowers before harvesting a large amount. Flowers should be harvested in the morning or the cool of the day. Choose flowers that are at their peak and avoid ones that are not fully open or past their prime. Storage in a cool basement or refrigerator in moist baggies is recommended until flowers can be used. Most flowers with short stems need to be used within 3-4 hours of harvest. It is best to remove stamens, pistils, sepals or any part of the flower that might distract from the true flavor of the

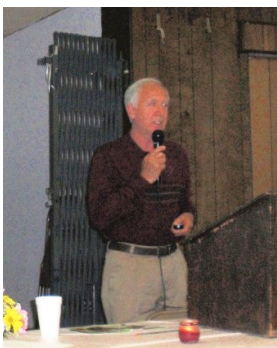
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Iron County Soil & Water Conservation District

Annual Dinner Meeting

We had a good turn out for our Annual Dinner Meeting and



Poster Contest. This year's guest speaker was Electrical Engineer & Hydropower Consultant, Dan Jarvis. He had a very interesting power point presentation and talked about the rebuilding of the Taum Sauk reservoir, after which he took time to answer questions about the project. Dan was our Conservation Farmer of the Year in 2005.

This year's Iron County Conservation Farmer of the Year award went to Josh Harbison. Josh purchased his family's 500 acre



farm in 1999 and has done numerous cost-share practices through the Soil & Water District and EQIP practices with NRCS, along with practices he has done on his own. He works very diligently to apply good conservation practices to his land.

He has a Woodland Exclusion, fencing cattle out of the woods; a DWC-1 pond practice with a watering system, along with two other ponds and a spring development for his grazing system. He also leases 2000 acres for his farming operation and runs 350 to 400 steers per year.

To view more photos of our annual dinner and the poster contest, visit our web site at: www.swcd.mo.gov/iron

Poster Contest

There were a lot of really great posters this year for our "Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats" theme. This year's 5th grade winners were:



Arcadia Valley:

1st Place: Alexa Holder
2nd Place: Wyatt Henson
3rd Place: Jayla Wilson



Bellevue:

1st Place: Kearstin Tuttle
2nd Place: Kinsey Phelps
3rd Place: Allison Rawlins



South Iron:

1st Place: Kallie Middleton
2nd Place: Kaden Brewer
3rd Place: Sarah McDonald



Viburnum:

1st Place: Tristen Hulsey
2nd Place: Alexis Glandon
3rd Place: Dakota Davis

County Winners: 1st Place: Alexa Holder; 2nd Place: Kearstin Tuttle; 3rd Place: Kaden Brewer. *Congratulations to all of our winners!*

Stockpiling Tall Fescue

Nearly any type of forage can be stockpiled, but tall fescue is the species most widely used for this purpose. Tall fescue typically makes a good amount of growth in autumn, it has a waxy layer on its leaves that makes them resistant to frost damage and weathering, and grazing to low winter residual height has little effect on its spring re-growth or stand density. In addition, tall fescue forage accumulates a high concentration of soluble carbohydrates in the fall. The result is that stockpiled tall fescue not only had good forage quality, it maintains this quality extremely well through the winter. In fact, the total digestible nutrient and crude protein content of stockpiled tall fescue is typically significantly higher than the average hay fed to beef cattle.

Stockpiling may also help reduce the toxicity of endophyte-infected tall fescue. A 2001 study showed that levels of the toxin ergovaline found in endophyte-infected fescue dropped during the winter grazing period. In light of the slow decline in protein content and digestibility of stockpiled fescue forage, this makes a strong case for delaying the use of stockpiles toxic endophyte fescue as long as possible into the winter months. This can be done by grazing winter annuals or stockpiled summer forage first.

No-till Drill
Available to Rent
\$8.00 per Acre

Call 573-546-6518
For more information



Soil test kits are available through the Extension office

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Soil Savers Corner

Summer Fun Word Search



Barbecue	Ice Cream
Baseball	Park
Bonfire	Picnic
Camping	River
Canoe	Sunshine
Fireworks	Swimming
Flowers	Water

S U N S H I N E S
T E U C E B R A B
C A M P I N G O S
T Y A W C L A C L
S R S R E W O L F
K A L H C I A S G
R T O A R B W N L
O M N I E D I G R
W O G S A M L O I
E T A P M H J B V
R B C I N C I P E
I D W A T E R O R
F S B O N F I R E

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petals.

Do not eat commercially available flowers from florist or garden center unless you know they were grown for eating. It is best to steer clear of any flower that you suspect contains pesticide, growth regulator, or fertilizer residues. Beware of using roadside flowers. Just remember that not every flower is edible and not everyone will like edible flowers. As with any new foods, start out moderately.

Take Care in Gardening by Donna Aufdenberg

As the gardening trend is growing, many people are spending more time outdoors and it is very important that we make sure we stay healthy while doing gardening tasks during the summer months.

- Do tasks in the garden in the morning or evening hours. Avoid the peak sun and heat hours during the day.
- Use sunscreen. A fresh bottle will be most reliable. Watch the expiration dates and test it before using it. If it is clumpy, off-color or smells funny, pitch it!
- Wear shoes that are appropriate for the task. A blackened toe from a heavy object landing on it isn't funny! Have you tried using a shovel with flip-flops on? I've seen gardeners try!
- Wear a good fitting, wide-brimmed hat to protect the neck, face and eye from the hot sun rays. A good hat will stay in place when you look down. You shouldn't have to keep adjusting it!
- Sunglasses can protect eyes from the sun and bright light. It is best to use large-framed eye protection with a wrap-around design to protect against debris being blown or thrown into the eyes.
- Your hands are two of the most important parts of your body—WEAR GLOVES! They provide protection against scratches, blisters, dirt stains, and drying out from contact with the soil.
- Use the right tools for the job. The wrong tool can lead you to use the wrong muscles, throw your back out or give you a blister on your hands.
- Finding a tool that fits your hand or your height is important. My husband complains that my shovel hurts his back - my shovel has a short handle and he has to stoop over to use it. I can't help it that I am short!
- Stretch before doing major tasks. This will help your muscles from becoming achy if much work is done.
- Switch tasks often. Nobody wants tennis elbow. Planting 150 bulbs in one day taught me a lesson a couple of years ago. Limit your tasks to 10-15 minutes and then switch.
- Take breaks and rest! Don't make gardening a chore. Keep it light and enjoyable and that way you keep an interest! **Happy Gardening!**



How to Water Efficiently

by Katie Kammler, University Extension Agronomy/Plant Sciences Specialist

Water deeply and infrequently. Shallow watering encourages shallow roots. Deep watering causes the plant roots to grow deeper seeking moisture and allows them to be less vulnerable to drought and heat stress. **Avoid runoff.** If the water is running off or pooling on the surface, you are applying water faster than the soil can accept it, therefore it is not doing anything for your plants. **Adjust sprinkler position.** Water only targeted areas. Applying water to pavement does not accomplish anything. **Use a timer.** Water can be turned off after a set amount of time and run at certain times of the day. **Water plants in the morning or evening.** This timing reduces water loss to evaporation and wind. **Overwatering drowns plants.** Plant roots cannot get oxygen in a water logged soil. Overwatering also causes disease problems. Use a rain gauge to measure the amount of water the sprinklers are putting out. Turn off sprinklers if it has been raining (like this spring!) Most lawns and gardens need 1 to 2 inches of water per week.

Upcoming Events:

- ♦ **July 5th** - Our offices will be closed in observance of Independence Day
- ♦ **July 7th** - Canning Class
- ♦ **Sept 6th** - Our offices will be closed in observance of Labor Day

**Hot Water Bath Canning Fruit and Salsa**

Presented by Judy Lueders, Food and Nutrition Specialist
July 7th, 6 pm to 8 pm @ Iron County Health Department
606 W Russell Street in Ironton
Cost is \$10 Per Person, Class Limited to 20
Please Pre-Register by Calling 573-546-7515
Hands on Demonstration Making and Canning Salsa
University Extension Programs Are Open To All

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*How to Water Efficiently

Cost-Share Assistance Available

Sheet and Rill Erosion Sheet erosion occurs when a very thin layer of soil erodes and often goes unnoticed. Rill erosion happens when a concentrated flow of water causes small channels to develop. Left untreated, the most productive part of the soil will be lost. Funding is available to establish vegetative cover or construct terraces, diversions or windbreaks.

Gully Erosion Gully erosion is severe erosion in which trenches are cut into the soil by running water. Water is channeled across unprotected land and the soil is washed away along drainage lines. By diverting the water flow and stabilizing the gully, this problem can be overcome with terrace systems, diversion, establishing permanent vegetative cover, or the construction of sod waterways or water impoundment reservoirs.

Woodland Erosion Soil, waterways and timber production suffer when woodlands are grazed. The removal of soil or vegetation through animal feeding and trampling or improper tree harvesting allows soil to become susceptible to erosion. Landowners are encouraged to exclude livestock from the woodland area, restore skid trails and logging roads during timber harvesting and install water bars as diversions to prevent erosion on long, narrow slopes.

Sensitive Areas Agricultural land along streams, springs or fields that has the potential to preserve water quality by filtering and absorbing pollutants is known as a sensitive area. Buffers collect and filter out sediment and other nutrients that run off of agricultural fields. Funding is available to install buffers, field borders, filter strips, riparian forest buffers and exclude livestock from streams while providing alternative water.

Groundwater Protection Groundwater is water beneath the earth's surface that fills pores between materials such as sand, soil or gravel. Funding is available to install a composting facility, spring development or close an abandoned well, which can have an impact on water quality.

Streambank Erosion Landowners are losing land to streambank erosion every year. Streambanks can be protected by providing adequate vegetation, stabilizing the bank. Water quality can also be improved.

Grazing Management Missouri ranks third in the nation for cow/calf production, which utilizes the many acres of pastureland in the state. Installing a grazing system will reduce feed costs, improve profitability, reduce or prevent erosion and protect water quality.

For more information on the Cost-Share program, please call our office @ 573-546-6518 or visit our website at:

www.swcd.mo.gov/iron